



# Press Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **USFF Provides Fleet Guidance on Sequestration Implementation, Reinforces Safety**

Norfolk, Va. (March 6, 2013) – Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces (USFF) released a message March 6, reminding commanders that safety underpins all other lines of operations even as they execute plans to reduce costs in accordance with across-the-board spending cuts known as “sequestration.”

In the message, Adm. Bill Gortney told commanders to continually assess their commands in execution of any plan. “It is your responsibility to assess if and when your command is approaching the limits of safe operation,” Gortney stated, “it is then your duty to exercise your authority to suspend operations to prevent mishaps.”

He added that to safely execute assigned missions, commanders should focus on human factors, adherence to written procedures, and utilization of risk management in planning and execution.

“One hundred percent of fleet mishaps in the past six months have been a result of human error,” wrote Gortney. “It is imperative that you keep your people focused on the tasks at hand and eliminate distractions from those things they are unable to influence, like the fiscal climate.”

Gortney stated that only ready units will deploy and while the financial landscape this fiscal year will continue to be a challenge, everyone must remain focused on the tasks at hand.

The message also prioritized current actions and provided guidance for commanding officers as they implement reductions, cancellations and changes to operations, training and other support functions.

While he stated that military pay and housing will not be affected, Gortney noted that “there will be impacts of activities, facilities and functions,” and acknowledged that “the potential for civilian furloughs remains real.”

The message closed with a return to the emphasis on safety. Gortney told his commanders and commanding officers that “we cannot afford to injure people or break equipment. As we work through this difficult period, we must go no faster than safe, and only deploy ready units.”

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